

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT AND DECISION RECORD

Implementation of the Lower McKenzie Transportation Management Recommendations

EA OR 090-01-27

BACKGROUND

The Interdisciplinary Team for the McKenzie Resource Area, Eugene District, Bureau of Land Management has completed an Environmental Assessment (EA) and analyzed a proposal to implement various road decommissioning and maintenance projects over a 5 year period in the Lower McKenzie Watershed located on BLM Land. The analysis looked at one action alternative; Road maintenance levels and road closures shown in the "Transportation Management Recommendations" (Appendix A in the EA-01-27) would be implemented over a 5-year period. Approximately 82 miles of road would be maintained and in some cases upgraded or repaired for future long term use, and up to 25 miles of existing roads determined to fit the criteria in the "Transportation Management Recommendations" would be decommissioned and left in an erosion resistant condition. Up to 5 miles would be naturally decommissioned and removed from the road inventory. These road closures would be implemented to reduce road maintenance costs and in many cases reduce road surface erosion near stream channels. The EA and a preliminary Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) were made available for public comment September 26, 2001 to October 18, 2001.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

On the basis of the information contained in the EA (OR 090-EA-01-27) and all other information available to me, it is my determination that implementation of the Proposed Action will not have significant environmental impacts beyond those already addressed in the *Record of Decision for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl* (April 1994), and the *Eugene District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan* (May 1995), with which this EA is in conformance, and does not, in and of itself, constitute a major federal action having a significant effect on the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement or a supplement to the existing environmental impact statement is not necessary and will not be prepared.

DECISION

It is the decision of the Bureau of the Land Management to implement the proposed action (Implement "Lower McKenzie Transportation Management Plan") and project design features identified in the Environmental Assessment (EA-01-27) for the McKenzie Resource Area. The EA and FONSI analyzed the selected alternative and found no significant impacts. An environmental impact statement is not necessary and will not be prepared.

Implementation of this decision will decommission up to 25 miles of existing roads, and naturally decommission up to 5 miles of road, which will be removed from the road inventory. All design features of the Proposed Action described in the EA will be implemented.

No public comments were received.

The selected alternative is in conformance with the following documents:

“Record of Decision for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl,” April 1994;

“Eugene District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan,” May 1995 as amended by the Record of Decision (ROD) for Amendment to the Survey & Manage, Protection Buffer, and other Mitigation Measures Standards and Guidelines, January 2001.

RATIONALE

The proposed road decommissioning would reduce the road mileage in several areas, thereby helping restore natural hydrologic flows, reducing sedimentation and reducing disturbance to wildlife.

Project design features adequately protect environmental resources and minimize the risk of adverse effects which might result from implementing the project.

The No Action alternative was not selected because the environmental damage associated with keeping these roads open will gradually increase over time, as well as road maintenance funding not able to keep pace with the needs. Retaining these roads would result in increased costs and erosion.

CONSULTATION

The Proposed project effects on spring chinook and bull trout critical habitat and essential fish habitat are covered by programmatic Biological Opinion issued for Willamette Spring Chinook (June 28, 1999) and Columbia River Bull Trout (July 8, 1998), so no further consultation is required.

Project work would comply with the design criteria outlined within the bull trout & spring chinook programmatic biological opinion.

A public notice advertising the availability of the EA and preliminary FONSI appeared in the Eugene Register Guard on September 26, 2001. Additionally, the EA and FONSI were mailed to interested individuals and organizations (EA, p. 22). A 3 week public comment period closed on October 18, 2001.

Approved by: Emily Rice Date: 10/31/01
McKenzie Field Manager